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ABSTRACT

This issue of the "Indiana English Journal" contains four articles: "Value Clarification through World Literature" by R. Baird Shuman; "Polynesian Literature: Coming to Life in the Classroom" (with bibliography) by Barbara M. Elkington and Ruth P. Smith; "The Deirdre Legend in Three Irish Plays" by Ronald L. Baker; and "Teaching Asian Literature" (with bibliography) by Diane Takamune Anderson. Also included are two poems by Saul Rosenthal, "For an Unnamed Girl on Her First Day" and "Taking Flight," and a mini-review by Bruce MacKenzie, "Fictional Autobiography 2." (JM)

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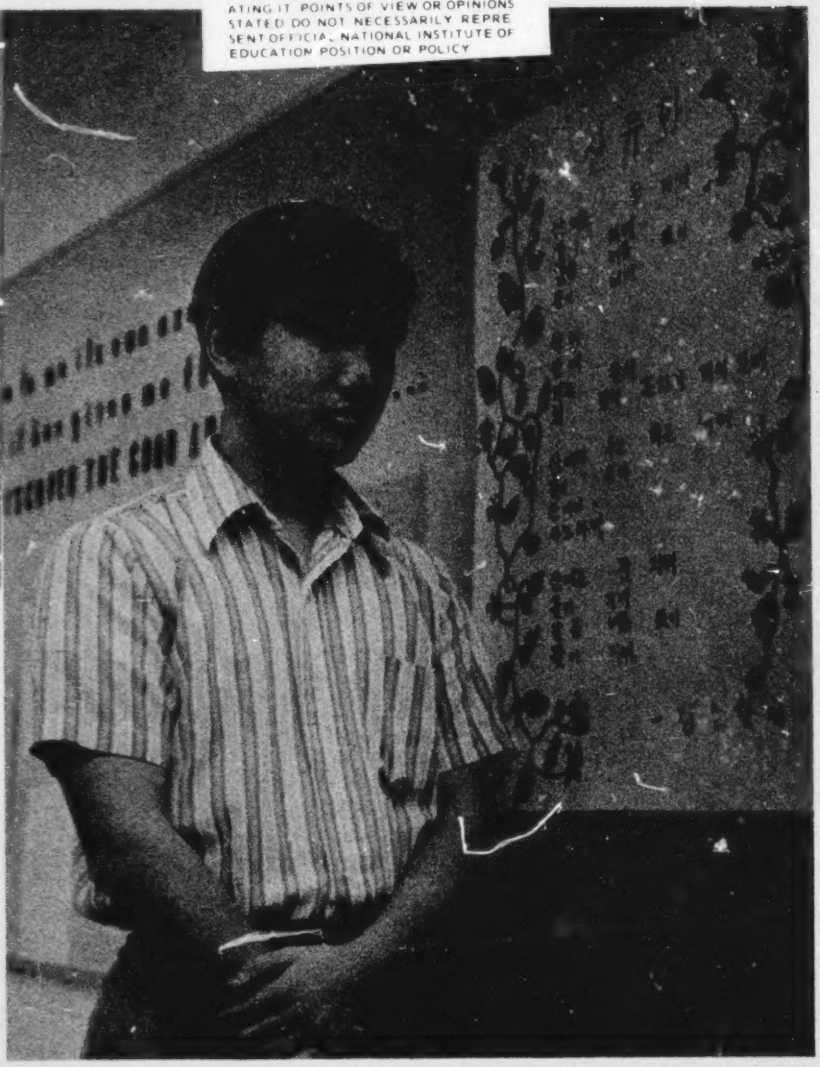

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COVER: Won Ju Choi, a Korean, exhibits an artistic poster he created depicting a poem in his native language which he translated into English for the enjoyment of his fellow students while attending North Vigo County High School in Terre Haute, Indiana. The project was the result of an assignment in an English class taught by Mrs. Mary Tranbarger.

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R. BAIRD SHUMAN

Value Clarification Through World Literature

Approaches to World Literature

World literature is such an encompassing area of study that those who attempt to teach it at the secondary school level are all but overwhelmed by the task of trying to approach it in a way which is at once meaningful and manageable. A number of formats have been experimented with and some have been found relatively effective. For example, the genre approach might consider drama, poetry, the short story, or the novel, using examples from a variety of countries. In a thematic approach, one might concern himself with the literature of protest, heroism, or initiation and draw examples from the literature of many lands.

One might decide to teach a sort of great authors curriculum, drawing on the writings of the most notable writers of a dozen or more countries, thereby piecing together a course that covers a wide geographical and cultural range. Or one might use a variation of this approach and offer a course which deals with Nobel Prize laureates in literature, individualizing the instruction in such a course by having each student select one of the laureates as an author whose work he will read as fully as possible and into whose background he will delve extensively. Such a format can give great geographical spread to the literature program.

In schools offering multiple electives programs which run for from nine to twelve weeks, a course in mystery writing (Maury High School in Norfolk, Virginia entitled this course "Ghosts and Ghouls") or in some other type of writing might well include all sorts of multinational selections.

Still, offerings in world literature are most often found in full year courses in the last year of high school following the American literature (tenth grade) and British literature (eleventh grade) sequence. For the most part, these offerings deal with Western culture. For example, the widely used *Man in Literature: Comparative World Studies in Translation* contains 48 selections—37 stories, five poems, and six plays. Of these, six come from places other than Europe—two each from Japan and Latin America, and one each from Africa and India. It appears, therefore, that the world of the world literature anthology has generally been Europe, although this situation is beginning to be remedied.

Problems in Teaching World Literature

Four major problems beset one who would teach world literature:

1. Few secondary school teachers have a broad enough training in literature, particularly in non-Western literature, to be able to approach world literature with the assurance which they have in approaching British or American literature.
2. Much world literature must be taught in translation, and some teachers feel that teaching something which is removed from

the original through translation represents an unacceptable compromise.

3. Resources for teaching world literature in any thorough-going way are frequently unavailable to the average secondary school teacher.

4. The contexts within which much foreign literature is set are so far removed from the experience of one's students, who may experience great difficulty in understanding the plots, themes, and sociopsychological motivations of what they are reading.

The teacher must recognize these difficulties and be prepared to meet them. Perhaps the fourth problem is the greatest, and it is with this one that many teachers must be most largely concerned. However, all four problems are formidable and must be addressed realistically.

Preparing to Teach World Literature

The typical preparation of any English teacher will contain sufficient amounts of literary criticism that the teacher can approach independently any work of literature with a better than average ability to assess it and understand it. Most of a typical English teacher's specific training will be in the areas of British and American literature and generally there will have been a greater emphasis on literature after 1800 than on literature before that date.

Few English teachers have had any specific course work in Oriental literature, African literature, Malaysian literature, or any of the other significant literatures which should, but often do not, find their ways into world literature courses. In order for most teachers to structure a course in world literature which is truly representative, they will have to rethink the role of teacher. If they view their role as that of an authority proffering the fruits of their learning to eagerly waiting students, then their courses will be limited by the boundaries of their own backgrounds and knowledge. If, on the other hand, they realize that the teacher, having a sound literary background, can intelligently oversee student excursions into a broad range of literary activities, some of which they will not have had direct experience with themselves, they will be in a position to help the student to individualize his own learning experience, and the model of cooperation will pervade the classroom rather than the model of competition.[1]

All the English teacher can do to prepare to teach world literature in any thorough-going way is to read as much as possible, and the reading is most effective if it is focused on a single national literature at a time rather than on several, for the focus will help the teacher to imbibe some of the sociopolitical atmosphere which is essential to an understanding of the literature of a given nation or group of nations. Therefore, while students in a world literature course are defining and exploring their own areas of interest, the teacher must necessarily be defining and exploring his.

The Translation Problem

Literature is filled with some highly competent, at times even inspired, translations. From the King James *Bible* on through to the Dudley Fitts translations from the Greek, the Moses Hadas translations from the Latin, the Lowe-Porter translations of Thomas Mann, and the Thomas

Whitney translations of Solzhenitsyn, one can point to monuments in the field of literary translation.

However, few would deny that where it is possible to read a literary work in the original, this is highly desirable. Therefore, teachers who would teach world literature might consider the advisability of approaching it through emphasizing Commonwealth literature. The cultural and geographical spread of Commonwealth literature, covering as it does the rich and varied literatures of England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Canada, the West Indies, Australia, New Zealand, India, and much of Africa, provides assurance that the highest aims of teaching world literature might be well met without dealing at all with works in translation. Scarcely a major social problem exists upon which these literatures have not touched, and certainly the artistry of these literatures is comparable to the artistry of any other modern literature.

Finding Resources in Commonwealth Literature

Regardless of how one approaches the teaching of world literature, non-Western sources are sometimes difficult to find. Anthologies are usually heavily weighted toward Western literature, as we have noted, and inexpensive paperbacks are not always available.

In presenting Commonwealth literature, the teacher has ready and easy resources in the literature of the British Isles, and this might provide him with a good starting point. Also, he and his students will have a better background for this literature than for the colonial literature which will also be dealt with in the course.

A dearth of good, inexpensive sources exists in Commonwealth literature, but sufficient books are available to make it feasible to teach world literature from this perspective, particularly if groups of students are encouraged to pursue independent projects on various parts of the Commonwealth.

Appropriate Canadian resources are less plentiful than one might suppose. The best resource for secondary schools would be eight novels by Mazo de la Roche published in paperback by the Fawcett Publishing Company for under $1 per title. Stephen Leacock has been much anthologized and his work is easy to find in the average high school library, as is the work of Robert Service, whose selected poems appear in an Apollo edition which retails for $1.95. Although Service's poetry is not of the highest quality, it is popular with high school students. School libraries also might be persuaded to enter subscriptions to two excellent Canadian poetry magazines, the *Antigonish Review* and the *Tamarack Review*. Libraries would be well advised also to obtain at least one copy of the excellent comprehensive anthology of Canadian literature entitled *A Century of Canadian Literature*, edited by H. Gordon Green and Guy Sylvestre.

West Indian literature has much to communicate to today's youth, since it deals extensively with the theme of alienation. Again, inexpensive editions of such work are not plentiful, but one of the best examples of modern West Indian fiction is George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin* which is available in a $1.50 Macmillan paperback edition. *West Indian Narrative: An Introductory Anthology*, edited by Kenneth Ramchand, is also useful and is available in a Humanities paperback for $2.

Faber and Faber is soon to bring out a hardback anthology of West Indian writing.

Australia's best known writers—Martin Bond, Dymphna Cussack, T. A. G. Hungerford, Hal Porter, Randolph Stow, and even the 1972 Nobel laureate, Patrick White—are not yet available in the United States in paperback editions. However, it is hard to imagine that this situation will not soon be remedied. Meanwhile, two ready sources are available in paperback: *Australian Writing Today*, edited by Charles Higham, published by Penguin for $1.75 and *Australia Speaks: An Anthology of Australian Speeches*, edited by A. L. McLeod and available from the Wentworth Press for $5.

New Zealand literature is more accessible in the United States than is that of Australia. Also, the literature of New Zealand has considerable application to situations that the average high school senior has been exposed to. A common theme is that dealing with the artist's alienation from a middle-class society. New Zealand literature is also beginning to include a number of books dealing with the conflicts which young people have with a highly traditional, conservative society. At the moment the most appropriate paperbacks available are the following:

Sylvia Ashton-Warner. *Spinster*. Simon and Schuster, $2.95.
Teacher. Bantam, $1.25.
Janet Frame. *Faces in the Water*. Avon, 95c.
M. K. Joseph. *Hole in the Zero*. Avon, 75c.
Katharine Mansfield. *Stories of Katharine Mansfield*. Random House, $1.65.

African literature is readily available in paperback, both anthologized and as works by individual authors. The best anthologies in paperback are the following:

Africa in Prose. O. R. Dathorne and Willifred Feuser, eds., Penguin, $1.75.
African Assertion. Austin J. Shelton, Jr., ed., Odyssey, $2.65.
African Short Stories. Charles R. Larson, ed., Macmillan, $1.50.
African Treasury. Langston Hughes, ed., Pyramid, 95c.
African Voices. Peggy Rutherford, ed., Grosset and Dunlap, $2.95.
African Writing Today. Ezekiel Mphahlele, ed., Penguin, $1.75.

The works by individual authors that are most appropriate for use in the senior high school are the following:

Abrahams, Peter.	*Mine Boy*. Macmillan, $1.50.
	Tell Freedom. Macmillan, $1.50.
	This Island. Macmillan, $1.95.
	Wild Conquest. Doubleday, $1.95.
	Wreath for Udomo. Macmillan, $1.95.
Achebe, Chinua.	*Arrow of God*. Doubleday, $1.45.
	Man of the People. Doubleday, $1.45.
	No Longer at Ease. Fawcett, 75c.
	Things Fall Apart. Fawcett, 75c.
Ekwensi, Cyprian.	*Burning Grass*. Humanities Press, $1.50.

	Jagua Nana. Fawcett, 75c.
	People of the City. Fawcett, 75c.
Huxley, Elspeth.	*Flame Trees of Thika.* Pyramid, 75c.
Paton, Alan.	*Cry, the Beloved Country.* Scribner, $1.95.
	Too Late the Phalarope. Scribner, $1.65.
	Tales from a Troubled Land. Scribner, $1.95.

The writer's research has not yet taken him sufficiently into Indian literature for him to comment here on teaching resources for it.

A Value Orientation

The purposes of dealing with literature at the secondary school level are, quite properly, different for every teacher and every student. It is important that some senior high school students begin to learn the tools and conventions of literary criticism. However, as the secondary school population becomes increasingly diverse and as society in general undergoes the sort of drastic change which all of us daily experience and which social critics like Alvin Toffler write about, teachers must reassess as realistically as possible the reasons for including literature in the English curriculum.

Few high school students are destined for careers as literary critics; few of those who plan to continue to college are likely to become English majors. If literature is approached from too technical a standpoint, one can predict that few high school students will grow into adults who turn to reading as a pleasurable and voluntary pastime once they have been graduated. Morris Sweetkind reminds teachers that young readers are well advised to "explore *truth of experience* rather than *truth of fact*"[2] in literature; but too few teachers have heeded this admonition, even though most would concur that a major reason for the study of literature is that of expanding one's awareness, of gaining experience vicariously. Knapton and Evans write that "the best thing a work of literature. . . can do is to provide the experience of itself as a work of art,"[3] and Geraldine Murphy stipulates that studying literature "affords the reader the deeper and broader understanding of human conduct and the freedom from human limitations."[4] Even more importantly perhaps, the influential Commission on English of the College Entrance Examination Board went on record in 1965 as saying that "the Commission believes that no discussion, no study, no reading of any work is complete without some consideration of possible extrinsic meaning, meaning that brings the work directly against the reader's own philosophical convictions and experience."[5]

In dealing with Commonwealth literature, one has an ideal opportunity to use a value-oriented approach. The literature of New Zealand lends itself quite spectacularly to questions relating to the plight of sensitive people in a society which many of its writers view as philistine. West Indian literature is filled with the problems of alienation and disorientation which one finds when economic necessity forces one to leave his land and seek his fortunes in a world to which he cannot easily adapt. African literature surges with the conflicts of apartheid. And all of these issues have strong parallels in literature to which the student might typically have been exposed earlier. For example, in *Sister Carrie,* the protagonist's plight in leaving the farm and going to Chicago to make her

fortune is not far distant philosophically from that of George Lamming's protagonist in *In the Castle of My Skin.*

Questions of war and peace are often broached in a representative range of literature from the Commonwealth, and one might do well to consider such questions from the kind of value standpoint suggested by Rita Bornstein in her fine article, "An Interdisciplinary Approach to War-Peace Literature," [6] in which a number of the goals of the course are stated in terms which lead to value clarification. Among these goals, the following are particularly concerned with leading the student to an exploration of his own value system:

> —To examine and evaluate traditional and personal values and beliefs concerning war and peace.
> —To analyze alternative models for peacekeeping and predict various outcomes.
> —To examine the relationship of the individual to the state and consider ways in which an individual can influence decisions affecting international relations.[7]

Through a value orientation, particularly when such an orientation is related to literature whose social context is quite different from that of the reader, the student can come to realize many of the similarities of the human condition and thereby broaden his own awareness and understanding of the race.

In essence, the purpose of exposing a student to a broad range of world literature is fundamentally that of helping him to see that he is part of something much larger than his own town or state or country, and that interrelationships necessarily exist among all of the disparate elements of his planet simply because the family of man is one. The approach to this important end can logically and validly be made through the teaching of Commonwealth literature, and such an approach will broaden and rather drastically alter the focus of what we term World Literature without a dependency upon the reading of works in translation.

FOOTNOTES

[1]For a discussion of these two models, see Robert E. Probst, "Literature," in R. Baird Shuman, ed., *Creative Approaches to the Teaching of English: Secondary* (Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1974), p. 15.

[2]*Teaching Poetry in the High School* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), p. x. Sweetkind's italics.

[3]James Knapton and P[illegible]and Evans, *Teaching a Literature-Centered English Program* (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 6.

[4]*The Study of Literature in High School* (Waltham, Mass.: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1968), p. 29.

[5]John Dixon, *Growth Through English* (Reading, England: National Association for the Teaching of English, 1967), p. 112.

[6]*English Journal,* 63 (February 1974), pp. 64-66.

[7]*Ibid.*, p. 65, *passim.*

BARBARA M. ELKINGTON AND RUTH P. SMITH

Polynesian Literature: Coming to Life in the Classroom

Palm trees waving in the tradewinds, frothing waves lapping the sand, dark-eyed beauties combing their black hair beside a clear pool—the lure of Polynesia which works so well on tourists works equally well in the classroom. Using the literature of these myriad islands with students is not, however, just a desk-bound travelogue and it includes much more than these stereotyped images so often associated with the Pacific.

It is possible to take students on a delightful learning experience by using the many Polynesian books available, whether the class members are elementary, high school, or college age. For all levels there are approaches and materials available to make a living, exciting lesson package. Depending upon the age of students and the aims of the teacher, it is possible to range from the telling of folktales through the exploration of Western stereotypes versus Pacific realities to the re-creation of island events and activities. Most exciting of all is that students can learn how people, real people, lead their lives in a part of the world far different from the average United States mainland city or town.

What is perhaps the most fun for teachers and older students alike is the constant recognition of images of great beauty discovered first in print and then found again in photographs of real places and people. Add to this the marvelous paradoxes in which the Polynesian triangle abounds and suddenly it's easy to understand why Polynesian people seem to delight in life. There is really the Fayaway of Melville, the Liat of Michener, the Tehani of Nordhoff and Hall, girls of great beauty and vitality, actually wearing pareaus printed in vivid colors, actually combing their shining long black hair in the sunshine. But there is also the bulky, waddling "Tutu" (grandmother), coming barefoot down the unpaved street with her clothwrapped bundle, laughing with her friends or maybe shepherding grandchildren. There is the glowing scarlet sunset over the water with black outlines of palm trees and thatched round-roofed houses sharply outlined against the ocean. But there is also the basketball hoop attached to one of the trees and the "fale vau" (an outdoor privy over the water).

There is the Hawaiian valley of unsurpassed beauty, with its verdant slopes springing toward the sky and waterfalls spilling down rocky crevices. But there is also the lingering ghost of the leper who hid along the cliffs, shooting at the soldiers who came to try unsuccessfully to capture him and take him away to the isolated colony far from his home. There are the gentle, merry people who swam out with flower leis to meet the ships and who still meet jet planes with similar garlands. But there are also the fierce warriors wielding clubs of whalebone and greenstone

who fought with great bravery and success to hold their island fastness against inroads of the European settlers. There were thousands of islanders who welcomed the strange light-skinned visitors in sailing ships only to find the visitors brought disastrous plagues of measles, small pox, and other unknown diseases.

Polynesia, which ranges from Hawaii on the north to New Zealand on the south and Easter Island on the east, is a truly great setting for literary adventures. With elementary school children, a combination of reading and activities can be particularly successful. At one special school in Honolulu, teachers for years have known and demonstrated this.

"Makahiki" at Hanahauoli School is the Hawaiian Thanksgiving. The day before Thanksgiving at ten o'clock in the morning, parents and friends fill the courtyard to see the children re-live the ancient festival that was celebrated in the days of the Kingdom long ago.

Preparation for the event begins in the third grade, where the children concentrate on the Hawaiians. As early as September the class starts its work by planting and caring for a garden in which they grow Hawaiian foods to be presented to Lono at Makahiki, and to be enjoyed at a "luau" following the festival.

One third grader reported:

> We had a luau. We dug an "imu." We dug up taro and sweet potatoes from our garden, washed it off and wrapped it for cooking in the imu. We dug "pia" from our garden and grated coconuts. We pounded our own "poi" and made "lomi lomi" salmon. We had to cook the food for about four hours. Then we uncovered the imu and had a feast with entertainment. It was Fun!

Third graders know that they can't "cram" a garden; they have to plan ahead, plant, water, weed, and love their garden every day.

For many weeks the children study food, clothing, shelter, government, canoe making, games and sports, music and dance, and crafts of old Hawaii. They learn the answers to such questions as:

How were these islands created?
What are the migrations in Polynesia?
How did the people build their houses?
What kind of government did they have?
What food did they eat and how did they prepare it?
What did they do for clothing?
How did they dye their cloth?
What did they do for recreation?

The children go to the Bishop Museum and the Honolulu Academy of Arts to see the extensive collections of tools used for building houses, for hunting the wild pig, for catching fish, and for making "kapas." They see, and later make, the "Adz," a stone blade lashed to a wooden handle with strong fiber. They examine the wood and bamboo tools used in making kapa and learn that all the dyes are made from the bark, juice, fibers, or roots of plants and trees or from soils of different colors. They see movies of volcanoes in action, see pictures, and hear lectures on Hawaii.

They return to school and make the things they have seen. Each child makes a kapa, though not from plant fiber. He uses unbleached muslin which he dyes in the old way. He creates his own design and prints it on

his material. He wears his kapa at Makahiki every year thereafter, but he is not allowed to take it home until he is in the sixth grade. Kapas often are hung with reverence on the walls of living rooms or bedrooms of the children. They love what they have made.

Two children—conch-shell blowers—announce the opening of the festival. Lono, God of the Harvest, leads the procession with his attendants. The children follow, carrying their offerings of bananas, papayas, mangos, coconuts, wauke shoots, bamboo, kapas, mats, a polished bowl, and leis and flowers of many kinds. After Lono's special gifts have been presented, the children from the third through the sixth grade march in, each child carrying a box of his own making, filled with fruit or vegetables. At the close of Makahiki a Salvation Army truck takes all the food to serve at its big Hawaiian Thanksgiving dinner for many of the needy people in Honolulu.

The fifth grade plays rhythmic music with bamboo and gourds during the procession. Following the presentation of gifts, the fourth grade chants an ancient prayer to Lono—first in Hawaiian and then in English.

O Lono of the broad leaf.
Let the low hanging cloud pour out its rain
To make the crops flourish.
Rain to make the kapa plant flourish
Wring out the dark rain clouds
Of Lono in the heavens.
O Lono, shake out a net full of food,
a net full of rain.
Gather them together for us.
Gather food, O Lono!
Gather fish, O Lono!
Wauke bark for kapa and
oleua dyeing kapa.
'Amama. It is free.

After the solemn program, some children enter into the games and sports of Old Hawaii, and other children entertain with songs and hulas of long ago. Such excitement, seeing the boxing, racing, hand wrestling, foot pushing, cartwheel turning, spear sliding, somersaulting, and finger pulling! The tug-of-war ends the games and sports. Lovely hulas danced by beautiful children in their own created kapas conclude the festival. With great dignity the children once more form a procession and leave the courtyard. Another Makahiki has come to an end!

While variations of the Makahiki could be effectively utilized, it is equally possible to bring to life the literature of Polynesia in high school or college classrooms. Reading, of course, is often most effective because students enjoy the scope and excitement of Nordhoff and Hall s *Bounty Trilogy* or Michener's *Tales of the South Pacific.* Jack London's marvelous *South Sea Tales* can introduce them to that fearful horror of low-lying islands, the hurricane, and also one old woman's capacity to endure such a storm. Somerset Maugham raises thoughtful questions in his stories called "Red" and "Rain," both found in the *The Trembling of a Leaf.* Robert Louis Stevenson's sketch of his last years *Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa* can be the opener for a student who goes on to *Fia Fia* by James Ramsey Ullman. Some students still find the frontier humor of

Mark Twain enjoyable as he recounts his adventures in Hawaii in the last part of *Roughing It*. Of course, there are the surfing stories, the tales of romance and adventure in Hawaii like *The Sandalwood Fan*.

It is possible to do more than read about Polynesia. High school students who are taking a shop course as well as English might find rewarding the creation of a bone fishhook, like the one Maui was supposed to have used to pull up the islands of New Zealand. It would make an interesting piece of jewelry. There are numerous carving possibilities illustrated in *The Decorative Arts of the New Zealand Maori* by T. Barrow. Mulberry bark isn't available just any place, but cloth works as well to reproduce the geometric designs of Tapa cloth. A step-by-step process on this is shown in the filmstrip, "How to Make Tapa Cloth," produced by the educational media department of The Church College of Hawaii. Using shells to make jewelry pieces such as leis or bracelets (for arm or leg) might result in pieces not too popular with parents but enjoyed by teenagers.

College students also can go beyond the reading of fascinating books if they wish. In some parts of the mainland United States, they would find it possible to search out Polynesians residing far from their island homes. They could then collect numerous articles of folklore—stories, riddles, proverbs, superstitions—or do a comparative study of childhood on an island as opposed to childhood in a city. Of course, it is always possible to have a luau; it really helps to know someone in Hawaii to whom teacher or students can write for recipes, foodstuffs, and decorative items. Perhaps through an exchange with English students in a Hawaiian school, a class could develop the necessary contacts. Ultimately, it is possible although fantastic, to use the study of Polynesian literature and lore as the impetus for a trip.

From the beginning, Western man has been intrigued with the rumors, legends, and facts of the Polynesian islands. The fascination still exerts its pull on emotion and imagination. Don't resist, just pick up a book and visit one of the loveliest parts of the world.

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FOR AN UNNAMED GIRL
ON HER FIRST DAY
(2/18/74)

Had I a wizard's art
To enchant a stainless child,
To save you from
A score of years, or four,
From thirty thousand days
Of heartbreak, desperation,
Loneliness, defeat,
Betrayal, blasted dreams,
Error, ignorance,
Sin, self-hatred,
Guilt, regret,
Transience, doubt,
Absurdity, despair,
All endless ills
Of flesh and spirit:

I would be tempted.
Greatly tempted.

For a moment.
And then decline.

Such freedom
Would only bind.
Innocence unlost
The years would only
Lock with imbecility.

I would see you
Wise,
Resilient,
Humble,
Strong,
Curious,
Questing,
Grappling,
Daring,
Loving,
Laughing . . .

For these I know
No school but each day's
Small or dread disasters.

God grace us with
Such anti-wizards,
Disenchanters,
That you may know
All true enchantments
Starting with the
First sharp slap,
The convulsive cry
That soars aloud
With the breath of life.

—*Saul Rosenthal*

RONALD L. BAKER

The Deirdre Legend in Three Irish Plays

Folk literature and written literature have nourished one another since man first began to write; consequently, some knowledge of folklore often is helpful in understanding and evaluating written literature. This is especially true of modern Irish literature, for in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was a movement in Ireland that aimed to create a purely Irish literature based in part on Irish folklore. Variously called the Irish Literary Revival, the Celtic Renaissance, and the Irish Renaissance, this movement was the literary offshoot of a general nationalistic movement that fought for Ireland's home rule. Although the Irish Literary Revival was nationalistic in spirit, some of the best writing in world literature was produced during this period.

Irish writers of the Literary Revival borrowed folk themes from old Gaelic manuscripts of the Middle Irish Period as well as from the modern oral tradition. The most celebrated group of stories in the old manuscripts is the Ulster Cycle, of which Cuchulain is the central figure: however, the most famous story in this cycle deals with the sorrowful Deirdre, not with the mighty Cuchulain. In poetry as well as in prose, nearly every important Irish writer has treated the Deirdre legend. In Irish drama three writers have used the tale: A. E. (George William Russell), William Butler Yeats, and John Millington Synge. Comparing their plays with the folklore source helps in evaluating the achievements of these three playwrights.

Several writers, including Standish O'Grady and Eleanor M. Hull, have provided English versions of the Ulster Cycle, but probably the most influential translation has been that of Lady Isabella Augusta Gregory, who published her *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* in 1902. Besides furnishing Irish writers with subject matter, Lady Gregory's translation also helped some of them develop their styles. For in addition to borrowing folklore themes from the old manuscripts and modern oral tradition as subjects of literary creations, the writers of the Irish Literary Revival either revived the Gaelic language or used an Anglo-Irish dialect as the medium of literary expression. While Douglas Hyde and his colleagues in the Gaelic League attempted to revive Gaelic, Lady Gregory and her followers adopted the living language of English-speaking Irish as the vehicle for a uniquely Irish literature. Both Yeats and Synge praised Lady Gregory's Anglo-Irish idiom in her *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*. Of Synge's debt to her translation, Lady Gregory writes, "The rich abundant speech of the people was a delight to Synge. When my *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* came out, he said to Mr. Yeats he had been amazed to find in it the dialect he had been trying to master. He wrote to me: 'Your Cuchulain is a part of my daily bread.' " [1]

In motifs, incidents, and atmosphere Lady Gregory's translation of the Deirdre story is strikingly similar to a modern version collected by Alexander Carmichael from the oral tradition of the Gaelic-speaking

Scots.[2] In Lady Gregory's version Cathbad the Druid prophesies at Deirdre's birth that Deirdre will bring death and tragedy to the country; therefore, Dierdre's father isolates her in a house in the hills, where she is cared for by Levarcham. After 14 years Deirdre is discovered by a lost hunter, who tells Deirdre of the three sons of Usnach and who later tells King Conchubar of Deirdre's great beauty. On seeing Deirdre, Conchubar wants to marry her immediately, but Deirdre requests a delay of a year and a day. In the meantime, the three sons of Usnach appear, and Deirdre falls in love with the oldest, Naoise. The lovers elope to Scotland, where the Scottish king falls in love with Deirdre and attempts to kill the sons of Usnach. The deceitful Conchubar, promising forgiveness, persuades the sons of Usnach to return to Ireland in spite of Deirdre's warnings. With the help of Cathbad's magic, Naoise and his brothers are captured and beheaded. At the conclusion, Deirdre stabs herself, Fergus burns Emain Macha, Conchubar's house, and Cathbad the Druid places a curse on the King's house.[3] The oral version of Carmichael differs mainly in the conclusion, which makes use of the traditional rose and brier ending.

Most of the main incidents in Lady Gregory's translation can be found in A.E.'s three-act "Deirdre" (1902), the earliest of the three plays under consideration. Still, A.E.'s treatment of the traditional story is far more independent of Lady Gregory's version than are the Deirdre plays of Yeats and Synge. In A.E.'s play, as in some of the old manuscript versions, Concobar,[4] not Deirdre's father, hides her away; and Lavarcam, who watches over her, is made a druid. Deirdre learns of Naisi and his brothers through a dream, not from a lost hunter. Moreover, the sons of Usna meet their death not so much through Concobar's treachery as through Lavarcam's well-meaning deception. She tells Concobar that Deirdre's beauty has faded, hoping he will forget about regaining her, and when the king discovers that Deirdre is as beautiful as ever, he becomes furious and with the help of Cathvah the Druid has Naisi and his brothers killed. Furthermore, it appears that classical tragedy has influenced A.E.'s "Deirdre." Concobar is moody and passionate because in his youth he was cursed for a sin he committed against one of the Sidhe, and Naisi's *hamartia* is his excessive pride. While in exile he says, "I would give this kingdom I have won in Alba to tell the proud monarch I fear him not."[5] As Naisi's pride proves stronger than Deirdre's warnings, he returns to Emain Macha, knowing that death is almost certain.

But A. E.'s interpretation of the Deirdre story differs mainly in the language he uses and the atmosphere he creates, not in the incidents from the traditional tale he changes or omits. His diction is far removed from Anglo-Irish dialect, as he has Naisi saying such things to Deirdre as, "O enchantress, thou art there. The image of thine eyes is there and thy smiling lips, and the beating of my heart is muffled in a cloud of thy golden tresses." [6] There is little in the style and chivalry of these lines to suggest the robust quality of the legendary source. Furthermore, although many folk stories certainly involve some encounter with the supernatural, the supernatural elements in A. E.'s play are not always traditional in Irish culture. They are part of his personal mysticism—a mysticism nourished by his reading of Blake, Jacob Boehme, the Rosicrucians, and oriental literature, although he claimed he had a natural mysticism even before he read mystical literature.[7] By using a remote language; by emphasizing such mystical elements as gods, im-

mortals, and unearthly voices; by creating shadowy, unreal personages; and by insisting that his play be performed behind a gauze curtain—A. E. has removed the Deirdre story too far from its legendary beginning. Legends are stark stories of real people who move in the real world, and as Yeats observed, the first production of A. E.'s "Deirdre" was more dreamlike than legendary: "It was acted with great simplicity; the actors kept very quiet, often merely posing and speaking. The result was curiously dreamlike and gentle."[8]

Although Yeats later praised A. E.'s play, at first he thought the drama was superficial and too sentimental. As a matter of fact, Yeats disliked the first performance of A. E.'s "Deirdre" so much that he refused to remain in the theater.[9] Of course, A. E. really was not a dramatist, as "Deirdre" was his sole contribution to the theater, so Yeats' own "Deirdre" (1904) is far better constructed and much more poetic than A. E.'s play. Unlike A. E., Yeats does not attempt to cover the entire story. Still, in his one-act play most of the major incidents of the traditional tale are discernible. King Conchubar finds Deirdre in a house in a wood where she is being cared for by a witch, and he raises her to be his bride. A month or so before the wedding, though, Naoise appears and falls in love with Deirdre, and they elope to Scotland, where kings attempt to kill Naoise and win Deirdre. In spite of ominous signs and Deirdre's warnings, Naoise returns to Conchubar after six years in exile. Conchubar's men trap Naoise, but the king agrees to free him if Deirdre will become his queen. Naoise refuses the bargain and is killed. As in Lady Gregory's translation, Deirdre stabs herself to death at the conclusion of Yeats' play.[10]

Although Yeats' play and Lady Gregory's translation share a number of common incidents, Yeats has his own interest in and interpretation of the Deirdre legend. At the beginning of Yeats' short play through the conversation of two musicians we learn of Deirdre:

> And nobody to say if she were human,
> Or of the gods, or anything at all
> Of who she was or why she was hidden there,
> But that she'd too much beauty for good luck.[11]

Thereafter, Yeats is mainly concerned with the way in which Deirdre confronts her destiny; consequently, he subordinates the figures of Naoise, Conchubar, and Fergus and eliminates other characters, including Cathbad, Levarcham, and Naoise's two brothers. By concentrating on the climax of the action and emphasizing Deirdre's reaction to her dramatic moment, Yeats has captured the spirit of some traditional poetry, say British ballads; however, his language, almost Elizabethan, in no way conveys the vitality of the legendary source of the Deirdre theme. His clear, simple, and polished verses as well as his concern with Deirdre's heroic choice give his "Deirdre" a quality that is a lot more Attic than legendary.

Although Synge's "Deirdre of the Sorrows" was written during his fatal illness and published posthumously in 1910 without his revision, it remains the most successful of the Deirdre plays. As one might expect, Synge's treatment of the story is more realistic than the plays of A. E. and Yeats. Like A. E.'s "Deirdre," Synge's play is in three acts and covers most of the traditional story; however, Synge rejects all the magical elements. While A. E. has Deirdre meeting the sons of Usna in a vision, Synge has

her meeting them in a forest. Moreover, in Synge's play Lavarcham no longer is a druidess or an old witch, and Cathbad the Druid with his prophecies and magical spells does not even appear. Like the other two playwrights, Synge has changed the legend, but he has refused to idealize it. Even the conclusion of Synge's play is realistic. Unlike some of the old manuscript versions of the story and A. E.'s play, Deirdre does not simply fall upon the body of her dead husband and die; but the lovers quarrel, Naisi is killed without super-natural intervention, and Deirdre stabs herself to death.[12] As Francis Bickley points out, since Synge "did not fear to let Naisi and Deirdre part on a note of bitterness, the story regained much of the full-blooded strength of the old Leinster version."[13]

Indeed, Synge has restored some legendary qualities to a story that has been reworked since the Middle Ages. Visiting the Aran Islands annually from 1898 to 1902 gave Synge firsthand knowledge of a living Irish folk culture, enabling him to regain something of the language and spirit of the ancient civilizations of Ulster. Describing the Aran Islanders, Synge, himself, says:

> . . . Their way of life has never been acted on by anything much more artificial than the nests and burrows of the creatures that live round them, and they seem, in a certain sense, to approach more nearly to the finer types of our aristocracies—who are bred artificially to a natural ideal—than the labourer or citizen, as the wild horse resembles the thoroughbred rather than the hack or cart-horse. Tribes of the same natural development are, perhaps, frequent in half-civilized countries, but here a touch of the refinement of old societies is blended, with singular effect, among the qualities of the wild animal.[14]

By using real folk language, by treating the story episodically, and by refusing to soften the story, Synge has created a drama that no doubt is much closer to the ancient legends of Deirdre than are the plays of A. E. and Yeats. Still, "Deirdre of the Sorrows" is not a folk drama, as some critics think,[15] nor is it merely a literary reaction of a traditional tale. For like A. E. and Yeats, Synge gives the legend his own interpretation, making it a more powerful piece of art. To the old elopement story, Synge adds his own theme of the decadence of growing old and losing beauty. In his play, while in exile in Scotland, neither Naisi nor Deirdre is deceived by Conchubar's promise of forgiveness. Both realize that their return to Ireland means certain death, but since death is inevitable, they prefer dying while they are still young and beautiful rather than losing youth and happiness in Scotland. In Act II this theme is emphasized through Owen, Synge's only invented character, who tells Deirdre:

> "You'll have great sport one day seeing Naisi getting a harshness in his two sheep's eyes, and he looking on yourself. Would you credit it, my father used to be in the broom and heather kissing Lavarcham, with a little bird chirping out above their heads, and now she'd scare a raven from a carcass on a hill. . . . Queens get old, Deirdre, with their white and long arms going from them and their backs hooping. I tell you it's a poor thing to see a queen's nose reaching down to scrape her chin."[16]

Owen tells Deirdre there is only one way to prevent loss of beauty and love: "I'll give you a riddle, Deirdre: Why isn't my father as ugly and as old as Conchubar? You've no answer? . . . It's because Naisi killed him."[17]

Realizing that first old age and then death will prevent their love from lasting, Deirdre persuades Naisi to return to Emain Macha. "You're right, maybe," he tells Deirdre. "It should be a poor thing to see great lovers and they sleepy and old."[18]

The Deirdre legend is a beautiful story that can withstand considerable variation and interpretation without much damage to its poetic core. Even A. E.'s mysticism and remote language could not completely ruin the traditional story. All three dramatists owe a considerable debt to ancient Gaelic storytellers for the basic plot of their plays, and Synge is indebted as well to the modern Irish folk tradition for the language and atmosphere of his drama. In fact, folklore has influenced virtually every element of Synge's "Deirdre of the Sorrows." In the final analysis, his play is more legendary as well as more poetic than the plays of A. E. and Yeats because Synge had actual contact with living folklore.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Isabella Augusta Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre* (London, 1913), p. 124.

[2]Alexander Carmichael, *Deirdre* (London, 1914). Carmichael collected his version in Gaelic on March 16, 1867, from John Macneill, a cottar at Buaile-nambodach on the island of Barra. The informant was eighty-three years old at the time and was not known as a storyteller; consequently, it seems highly probable that Carmichael reworked the story. Several modern Irish versions of the tale have been collected and are in the Archives of the Irish Folklore Commission in Dublin.

[3]From *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (London, 1902). The Deirdre story, "The Fate of the Sons of Usnach," has been reprinted in Vivian Mercier and David H. Greene, ed., *1000 Years of Irish Prose* (New York, 1952), pp. 44-72.

[4]The spelling of the personal and place names varies in the sources discussed. In each case, the translator's or author's spelling has been used.

[5]In *Plays of the Irish Renaissance, 1880-1930,* ed. Curtis Canfield (New York, 1929), p. 75.

[6]*Ibid.,* p. 71.

[7]Herbert Howarth, *The Irish Writers, 1880-1940* (London, 1958), p. 171.

[8]W. B. Yeats, *Dramatis Personae* (London, 1936), p. 80.

[9]Una Ellis-Fermor, *The Irish Dramatic Movement* (London, 1939), p. 41.

[10]In *The Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats* (New York, 1934), pp. 111-134. The play went through a number of revisions from 1906 to about 1922.

[11]*Ibid.,* p. 113.

[12]In *The Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge,* ed. T. R. Henn (London, 1963), pp. 231-273.

[13]Francis Bickley, "Deirdre," *Irish Review* (July 1912), p. 254.

[14]John M. Synge, *The Aran Islands and Other Writings,* ed. Robert Tracy (New York, 1962), pp. 28-29.

[15]For a discussion of this point, see Richard Bauman, "John Millington Synge and Irish Folklore," *Southern Folklore Quarterly,* XXVII (December 1963), 267-79.

[16]*The Plays and Poems of J. M. Synge,* p. 251.

[17]*Ibid.,* p. 251.

[18]*Ibid.,* p. 255.

DIANE TAKAMUNE ANDERSON

Teaching Asian Literature

Teaching Asian literature to high school students is fun.[1] What makes it fun, fascinating, and, I hope, edifying, is that it opens up a world that for so long was closed behind the doors of the unknown and the stereotype. For the many who have never ventured into it, the literature of East Asia represents a mysterious world of obedient women, exotic and sensuous experiences, silence, and horrific torture devices. It is, at best, an exotic collection of books by authors with names few can pronounce, at worst, a world populated by such characters as Fu Manchu, Charlie Chan, and, occasionally, Number Two Son. What it really is, once one opens the doors, is a world of people, at first strange, unlike ourselves and, at last, people just like us, like Ma Joad, Macbeth, and even Boo Radley.

Unfortunately, we, in many American English departments, have too long neglected this realm of literature that offers so much in contrast to and comparison with Western writing. Much of Asian literature suggests a vision of ambivalence, of an "in between" quality of life which is neither this nor that, but both this and that. The subtle immanence of this vision helps create the fascination of this literature for Western readers. Offering a world of community before individualism, the incidentalness of the monumental, the cyclic nature of the conclusive, and the irrational and intuitive nature of what Westerners have made rational and logical, it exposes the students to a literary world beyond the ethnocentric confines of our traditional English programs. It offers the students alternative visions of understanding and of ordering their places in life. Further, as a course in the study and appreciation of literature as an art form, the Asian readings enhance the students' awareness of the interrelationship among structure, style, and theme. They are quick to notice how the poetic obliqueness of Kawabata Yasunari's style, instead of emphasizing the ultimately less significant thoughts and actions of the characters, reinforces the importance of a different dimension of the novel, a dimension less palpable in Western literature. This is *yugen:* the pervasive atmosphere or mood created by man and by the natural and artificial objects in his world.[2]

Initiation into Asian literature is not without pain. "I kept looking for the next page, but that was the end of the book," is a frequent complaint of students long accustomed to the action-oriented and conclusive worlds of the Western novel. After finishing Kawabata's *Thousand Cranes* (1958),[3] for example, they lament the one hundred-odd pages they spent wondering how the protagonist Kikuji would overcome the influence of his father's past, only to find out that he does but does not—that eventually everything remains the same. Their encounter with *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* (Mishima Yukio, 1954) leaves them wholly confused when it concludes that everything that is, is not, that everything that is not, is, and that "one must do the deed precisely because it was futile."

They are mystified indeed reading Li Po's celebration of continual drunkenness in his T'ang Dynasty poem, "Awakening from Drunkenness on a Spring Day" (eighth century).

In structuring my course, "Oriental Literature," I choose materials to give the students the widest possible exposure to East Asian literature, within the limitations of a semester's course. However, I confine our readings principally to modern work which would interest the kind of high school student I am teaching. The course is also subject to my own personal interests, resulting in a greater emphasis on the Japanese and Chinese literatures than on Southeast Asian literatures. The following discussion includes some of the more salient aspects of the novels, poems, and short stories that are part of the required reading in the course.

We begin with the study of Haiku and the T'ang Dynasty poetry. These provide a good beginning as they are easy to read, they are deceptively simple, and most students have encountered Haiku in their elementary schooling. During our discussion of Haiku, we notice that this rigidly formal structure is more than just a three line, 5-7-5 syllable, short poem about nature. Rather, it embodies the Zen Buddhist precept of unity through opposites, the collision of these opposite images creating unity and thus beauty. For example, Shiki's nineteenth century Haiku—"A mountain village;/ under the piled-up snow/ the sound of water"—begins with suggestions of stillness and silence and ends with activity and sound. The opposites enhance and intensify one another; we hear the silence because there is sound, and we see the hidden activity because we feel the stillness.

With like simplicity, the poems of Li Po, Wang Wei, and Tu Fu (an eighth century poet) offer the students new insight into the "wholeness" of life. The simple presentation of a scene in Wang Wei's "The Cold Mountain" (eighth century) serves as a good example:

> The cold mountain turns dark green.
> The autumn stream flows murmuring on.
> Leaning on my staff beneath the wicket gate,
> In rushing wind I hear the cry of the aged cicada.

Poems like this one reveal a genuinely harmonious world of man *in* nature; man is a small but significant part of nature which exists not for man's pleasure or use but for its own sake. The Chinese have a word for this satisfying concept: *tsu-jan*, what has been called the self-thusness of nature. Like many Chinese brush paintings, these T'ang Dynasty poems always include a small reference to man: to a person or a man-made object like a gate, a water wheel, or a lost slipper. These objects or persons within the paintings and poems achieve a wistful place amid the grandeur of nature.

In prose, this simple inclusion of details of all sorts, what I have come to call "incidental naturalism,"[4] characterizes some of the best modern Japanese novels. The natural world and the incidental actions and objects of men function not to set the scene or mood but to be that mood, the *yugen*, to be an integral part of the theme and story. This inclusion of incidentals has a strong humanizing effect on tone and theme.

Natsume Soseki's *Kokoro* (1914) is an interesting novel in this respect. The story is about a young college student's relationship with an older man whom he calls *Sensei*.[5] The focus of the novel, which concerns

a love triangle, two suicides, and the death of the young man's father, evolves finally not from these momentous actions and situations, but out of the atmosphere in which these characters move. The poetic narrative softens the effect of these actions and, in the end, affirms a sad but calm acceptance of life as it is. K., one of the major characters in the novel, best expresses this acceptance of life as it is and will always be when, as *Sensei* observes, K. counts the beads on his Buddhist rosary. "Apparently he counted them many times a day. . . Surely, I thought, there is no end to counting beads strung together in a circle," and, one realizes, there is no end to *kokoro,* the "heart of things," which Soseki (pseudonym) portrays as the essential loneliness of all men.

However, as suggested above, the effect of such a potentially tragic theme is softened by the style of the narrative. It is the poetry of the prose, part of which is incidental naturalism, that compels the reader to acquiesce to the novel's theme of loneliness. The constant references to natural scenes, in this novel, provide a strong sense of *yugen.* In one of *Sensei's* early allusions to the deceit and greed which he discovers in all men's hearts, the narrative reads,

> Sensei looked as if he wanted to continue. And I wanted to say something at this point. But suddenly a dog began to bark behind us. Surprised, we turned around.
>
> Behind the bend, and next to the cedar saplings, dwarf bamboos grew thickly over a small patch of ground. The dog was looking at us over the bamboos, barking furiously.

In another passage, when *Sensei* portentously turns to the narrator and asks him, "You have never thought seriously of the reality of death, have you?" he almost simultaneously comments, incidentally, on a gingko tree nearby saying, "In a little while it will be beautiful here. The tree will be a mass of yellow, and the ground will be buried beneath a golden carpet of fallen leaves."

In *Thousand Cranes,* Kawabata creates similar moments by using incidental objects juxtaposed as in a Haiku: "In a gourd that had been handed down for three centuries, a flower that would fade in a morning." The natural world and the internal world of the character may coalesce:

> He saw the evening sun as he had seen it after the night with Mrs. Ota: the evening sun through the train windows, behind the grove of the Homomonji Temple.
>
> The red sun seemed about to flow down over the branches. The grove stood dark against it.
>
> The sun flowing over the branches sank into his tired eyes, and he closed them.
>
> The white cranes from the Inamura girl's kerchief flew across the evening sun, which was still in his eyes.

The harshness and coldness of the characters' personal worlds are lighted and warmed by the delicately exquisite world around them. This constant infusion of incidental material, which has often reminded me of the gentle cogency of Robert Frost's poetry, pervades these novels and others like them. It denies the tragic to free the reader's apprehension of other lives that continue, of things created and recreated, and that tragedies of the individuals are but a small part of life itself.

Of especial interest to many of my students is the theme of self-identity and self-discovery. The traditionally emphasized concepts of filial

piety, the Taoist and Buddhist renunciation of the self, and the communistic ideal of the community of men provide fruitful topics in terms both of the literatures themselves and the individual student's search for his own personal relationship to the world around him.

Mishima's "Patriotism" (1960) and *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* offer two views of self-identity which paradoxically are the same. The former, a short story about a lieutenant and his wife during the period preceding World War II, presents the dilemma created by the conflict between loyalty to military authority (as in the traditional Japanese *bushido* code) and loyalty to a group of personal friends with whom the lieutenant is in sympathy. These friends have overtly rebelled against the military authorities. His mission is to seek out and capture his friends and return them to certain execution. Unable to decide either to violate his strong military code or to move against his friends, the lieutenant decides upon another alternative—ritual disembowelment—or *seppuku*. Like the good wife of a samurai, his wife does not protest his decision; in fact, upon learning of it, she simply says, "I am ready, . . . I ask permission to accompany you."

The narrative describes vividly the two major events in which the couple engage after making the decision to die together. The first, the final sexual act they share, reaffirms the physical beauty of their love. The second, the lieutenant's and then his wife's suicides, confirms their moral beauty and courage. Each preserves his sense of self by unquestioningly believing in and executing the austere, traditional code of their society.

The wonderful thing that happens with this story is that the students' first reaction is an uneasy one. They are bewildered because, while they instinctively reject the complete obeisance to traditional values which encourage suicide and unequivocal loyalty to the military, they are nonetheless impressed with the beauty of the love between this man and wife. Thus the foundation is set for an inspiring discussion in literary analysis and philosophic and cultural ideals.

In contrast to "Patriotism," *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* offers another kind of protagonist, one who finds his meaningful identity in a different kind of world. Mishima describes Lieutenant Takeyama and his wife in intensely physical terms. Their ultimate act, the act which imparts the final meaning to their lives, is a physical one. In contrast, Mizoguchi, the central character in the novel, is a physically weak boy who stutters, who lies, who engages in immoral and perverse actions. He is the antithesis of the noble lieutenant. Yet even Mizoguchi realizes a certain satisfaction in his life. His physical ugliness forces his reliance upon an intellectual search for meaning.

As an acolyte in a Zen monastery, he encounters "Father Nansen and the Cat," a Zen *koan* (a parable used in meditation). This *koan* recounts the story of a T'ang Dynasty Ch'an priest who found his monastery divided against itself when two factions arose over the possession of a beautiful cat. Wishing to resolve the conflict over the possession of the cat, Father Nansen kills the cat, thereby allowing no one faction to possess it. When later a disciple, Joshu, returns, Father Nansen asks him how he would have resolved the conflict. Joshu answers by placing his shoes on his head. Father Nansen then laments that indeed Joshu's action was a "life-giving" one, whereas his own was a "murdering" one.

Mizoguchi, obsessed from his earliest memories with the beauty of the Temple of the Golden Pavilion, seeks its destruction as it serves only to remind him of his own transience, of his own ugliness. Only when he achieves a full understanding of the above *koan* can he "live." What he realizes is that all action is futile. Action changes nothing, because action changes only things, and only *no thing* is. By destroying the temple, he would not rid himself of its beauty since beauty is a *no thing*, a quality that transcends substance. To burn the temple would be to murder the cat. Yet, he also recognizes that action can be what the Taoists call *wu-wei* or nonaction: the path of least resistance. To stop himself from burning the temple would be an action in this sense, an action counter to his life's momentum toward destruction. To burn the temple would be to flow with the momentum of his life. He thus engages in nonaction and burns down the temple. Like Joshu, he acts in a futile manner to show that all action is futile.

Mizoguchi's sense of identity, then, comes with the realization that knowledge, not action, changes the world. He gives himself up to destiny, fate, or whatever one calls it, to act out his part in the flow of life.

The traditional and modern literature of China offers an alternative to America's "rugged individualism" and to the more abstract quality of Japanese literature. Less concerned with philosophical ramblings and psychological insights than its Japanese counterpart, it provides the students a relief from the abstruseness of Japanese literature and affords them an additional literary and cultural experience.

Chinese prose, unlike Chinese poetry, which originates from a literary language, derives from a folk tradition and a colloquial language. Its main purposes are entertainment and moral edification. The Ming Dynasty collection of stories (ca. 1620), such as "Wine and Dumplings" (anon.), preaches the Confucian ethics of filial piety and honorable conduct and follows a fairly conventional plot development. Every good Confucian story has a moral at its conclusion, an example of which is this final apothegm from "Wine and Dumplings":

> The statesman of the age was found among the topers;
> Outstanding, also, the dumpling-woman Wang.
> But for the rare vision of the men then in power
> These bright jewels would have stayed hidden in common dust.

What the Chinese story lacks in artistic subtleties and ambiguities, it compensates in rich characterization and finely paced action narrative.

Similarly, the Communist short story is both entertaining and instructive. Interestingly, these stories with their moral apothegms, apothegms which extol the glories and worth of the Communist party and its deified Chairman Mao, are structurally almost identical to the earlier Chinese stories. The values have changed; the vehicle for propagating them has remained the same. What was once the Confucian value of obeying the elders in one's family has been replaced by the value of obeying the members of the Communist party. In the short story "Two Ears of Rice" (Hsu Tao-sheng and Ch'en Wen-ts'ai, 1965[6]), a little girl sacrifices the pet chicken that swallowed some specially bred kernels of rice. In sacrificing for the good of the commune, she allows the commune to flourish. The story concludes,

When peasants lived in utter destitution
They had no means of growing better seeds;
But farming now is for the revolution,
Success must follow where the Party leads.

Of the Chinese stories we read in class, the ones which seem of greatest artistic merit are by an early twentieth-century writer, Lu Hsun.[7] His themes, while not blatantly communistic, reflect a growing disaffection for the corrupt and decadent Confucian society and for the inhumane separateness of man from his fellow men. "Kong Yiji" (1919) is a story of a human derelict, Kong Yiji, who, having failed the Civil Service exams for many years, finds he has no place in his society. In the tavern where the story is set, he is too educated to mingle comfortably with the peasants in the outer room and too ignorant, as indicated by his failure to pass the exams, to join the intellectual and social elite in their inner room. Scorned by both, he slowly deteriorates into a pathetic thief and drunkard. In the final scene, his legs broken by an impatient employer who has caught him stealing ink, he crawls back into the bar. Although the reader is never in full sympathy with Kong Yiji himself, he comes to be fully aware of the society which offered Kong Yiji no viable alternative to what he was.

In another story, "My Old Home" (1921), Lu Hsun again examines the decaying social structure of Confucian China during the years before the Communist Revolution. The story is told through the eyes of a man who returns to his rural home after an absence of many years. He returns to find his childhood playmate, Runtu, of whom he has the most nostalgic memories, looking to him as a servant to a master. The years have separated them. When as children they could play together without class barriers, they can now only politely and formally address each other. As he watches his young nephew and Runtu's son playing together, he wishes they might know a life unburdened by class distinction. Wistfully he observes,

> They should have a new life, a life that we have never known. . . . I had laughed up my sleeve to think that he [Runtu] was still worshipping idols. . . . Yet what I called hope was no more than an idol I had created myself. The only difference was that the object of his desire was close at hand, while mine was very remote.

Our course of study also includes Korean, Filipino, Thai, Indonesian, and Taiwan Chinese poetry as well as Korean, Filipino, Thai, and Burmese short stories. Of these, the students find two Filipino short stories most aesthetically satisfying.[8]

Amador Daguio's "Wedding Dance" (1953) takes place during the wedding celebration of a man and his second wife. It focuses on his first wife's misery as she stands in the dark, apart from the lighted festivities. The story is evocative in a cinematic way in its creation of an atmosphere of darkness, shadows, and distant lighted gaiety. More than that, it treats the complex and disturbing conflict between duty and tradition, on the one hand, and personal desire on the other. Both the man and his first wife, who was unable to bear him a son, suffer. They understand why they suffer but find themselves incapable of accepting it. The surface mood of the story is tautly quiet, belying, as in so many Asian stories, the turbulent human passions that strain beneath it.

N.V.M. Gonzalez' "A Warm Hand" (1965) reminds the students of a story they read earlier in the course, Akutagawa Ryunosuke's "In a Grove" (1922). Both stories dwell on the subjective realities which men, in order to morally or physically survive in their worlds, create for themselves. In "A Warm Hand," a shy young servant girl, excited by the romance of her mistress' world, is touched by a hand in her sleep. We never learn who has touched her, and the possibility exists that she was never touched at all, but simply imagined the hand on her face as she slept. The importance of this episode, the story suggests, lies in the girl's belief that she has been sought out by someone who needed her. This conviction changes her life. It alters her image of herself and her relationship to other people. Akutagawa's story also concerns the subjective nature of reality. He provides the reader seven versions of the death of a man in an isolated woodland grove. The students' first response to this story is to engage in a "who dunnit" search by comparing the seven testimonies and looking for discrepancies. This search proves useless, forcing them to accept that "who dunnit" is inconsequential. They finally understand that each version of the events that transpired serves to uphold the essential but fragile self-image of the person who tells it. Showing us that this image, whether in one's own eyes or in the eyes of others, is of greater value than life itself, the only three witnesses to the death, the dead man himself, his wife, and a bandit all confess to being the killer.

We conclude our semester's study of Asian literatures with the novel, *The Woman in the Dunes* (Abe Kobo, 1964). This simple story concerns a man, Niki Jumpei, vacationing among the sand dunes. For reasons he finds illogical, he is captured by local inhabitants and trapped in a deep sand pit with a woman. His attempts to build an escape device, after having measured the slope of the pit, fail. His stubbornness and passive resistance fail. His trickery fails. Resigned, he submits to his imprisoned life of shoveling sand. Knowing that he is no longer anxious to escape, his captors become careless and leave a rope ladder hanging into the pit. Yet, Niki remains, intrigued by his discovery that he can extract water from the dry sand and reassuring himself that he can escape at another time. Seven years later, the Court of Domestic Relations declares him a missing person.

Abe's character Niki learns that to overcome the sand in which he is trapped is to give himself up to it. To understand life is to realize that "'What's hardest . . . is not knowing what living like this will ever come to. But obviously you can never know, no matter what sort of life you live.' " And, Niki recognizes that to be lost is to be found.[9] He becomes what Abe calls the "Mobius man": the man who has joined reason with intuition and necessity with inclination to form a two-sided circle that ultimately has only one side.[10]

At its best, education results in the creation of Mobius men. A successful education culminates in the vitality of a student's synthesis of his academic and personal worlds. It is evident when, having read a piece of literature, a student knows that piece and appreciates it as well, and when he fulfills himself not merely in his work but through his work.

In attempting to help my students develop the qualities of the Mobius man, I encourage many nonliterary activities to complement the readings and literary discussions. Incorporated into the course is an extensive variety of activities which familiarize the students with the conventions

and traditions of the Asian peoples. Independently undertaking these pursuits, they visit Asian art exhibits, attend Japanese and Chinese movies, watch such Japanese television programs as the Japanese hit parade of popular songs, visit temples and rock gardens, and enjoy many other activities.[11]

Further, I find it useful to devise game-like activities in the classroom to assist the students in their understanding of some of the more recondite concepts and themes in Asian literature. They seem to enjoy this occasional game playing as a diversion from seminar discussion. The object of these games is a reification of concepts such as the Taoist belief in the function of the nonexistent, the futility of action, and living in the moment rather than for the moment or for the future.

Indeed, teaching Asian literature to high school students is fun. If the experience has been a satisfying one for me, the reasons are not difficult to discover. My satisfaction has derived from the students' response to the stories and the poems, to the ideas vivified within them, a response strained at first, finally excited and understanding. They seem, then, more able to see the limitations of logic as a solution to all problems, better able to trust and believe in the vast realm of intuitive experiences. A student may exemplify this knowledge in the simple perception that "no wonder my boyfriend gets mad at me every time I tell him to prove that he loves me." Because of what they learn, they seem less fearful of the natural cycle of human life, of the inevitable sadness, of growing old, of death, less harsh in their judgments of people seemingly unlike themselves, understanding that all humans share human feelings, that all experience love, anxiety, guilt, frustration, though they may express these emotions dissimilarly. Perhaps they even feel a bond among all humanity. Many of them have observed of Neil Diamond's "He Ain't Heavy . . . He's My Brother" that here is the quintessence of much of Asian literature. Indeed, they might even concur with Loren Eiseley's suggestion in *The Immense Journey* that what we need now is not a more intelligent race, but a gentler one.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Punahou School is a private, college preparatory school in Honolulu comprising kindergarten through the twelfth grade. The Academy includes grades nine through 12 and has an enrollment of 1600 students. The Academy English Department is, except at the freshman level, structured around the elective system. Presently, we offer the students 13 elective courses at the junior/senior level and six at the sophomore level. My course, "Oriental Literature," is a junior/senior elective. It has an enrollment of approximately 75 students each semester, generally more than half of whom are of Asian ancestry. The students' aptitude in English ranges from the average to the superior, although most are above average. They are quite able in interpreting, discussing, and relating themselves to concepts demanding an intellectual maturity beyond their years. Nonetheless, I find it preferable to avoid the "heavier" classics such as *The Tale of Genji* (ca. 1008) and *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (ca. 1754) to afford more time for twentieth-century writing, which the students generally find more relevant to worlds they know. Because

Punahou Academy operates on a variable schedule, 50% of my day is left unscheduled, during which time I can oversee other activities related to the course but not undertaken in class, such as composition, vocabulary-building, and the students' independent study of specific authors and individual works. In these pursuits I work with them individually in private student-teacher conferences.

[2]In her article, "Yasunari Kawabata's 'Narrow Bridge of Art,' " (in *Literature East and West*, Vol. 15, No. 4, Vol. 16, Nos. 1 and 2 [Dec. 1971, Mar. 1972, June 1972]), Dorothy S. Schlieman notes: *"yugen* [is] not a personal emotion, but a mood, an atmosphere." *Yugen* is described by Makota Ueda (*Literary and Art Theories in Japan*, 1967) as "an objective feeling generated from an external object." Her article is devoted to the poetry in Kawabata's novels, citing numerous passages which express this concept.

[3]Since the course is limited to literature in English translation, only commonly used English titles have been included here. On the other hand, personal names have been arranged in the native fashion, which in the Japanese and Chinese cases, finds the family name preceding the given name.

[4]Incidental naturalism is an aesthetic term used by W. N. Anderson II, in the context of Japanese contemporary life cinema, to refer to a stylistic emphasis upon ordinary, unremarkable events and material objects of human life. It implies the commonplace nature of the *type of* incidents presented but not necessarily of, e.g., the acting style, which, in these films, is often slightly formalistic.

[5]Edward McClellan notes in his translation of *Kokoro* that "The English word 'teacher' which comes closest in meaning to the Japanese word *sensei* is not satisfactory here. The French word *maitre* would better express what is meant by *sensei.*"

[6]I use the more conventional romanization of Chinese words in this article. The Communist system of romanization differs; Hsu Tao-sheng appears in the Communist system as Xu Daosheng, and Ch'en Wen-ts'ai,. as Chen Wencai.

[7]The Communists romanize Lu Hsun as Lu Xun.

[8]Dorothy Blair Shimer's paperback anthology *The Mentor Book of Modern Asian Literature* (New York: New American Library, 1969) is the best anthology of modern Asian writings I have seen. It includes poetry, drama, essays, excerpts from novels, and short stories from Japan, China, Korea, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, India, Pakistan, and Nepal.

[9]I find Abe's novel *The Ruined Map* (1970) more aesthetically satisfying, but experience has proved it too difficult for most high school students. It expresses the concept of "to be lost is to be found." The story tells of a detective who, in searching for a missing man, becomes lost himself and, in this lost state, discovers his personal identity.

[10]In *The Woman in the Dunes*, Abe describes the Mobius man in this way: "Someone had commented that the man resembled a Mobius strip. A Mobius strip is a length of paper twisted once, the two ends of which are pasted together, thus forming a surface that has neither front nor back. Had they meant that this man's union life and private life formed a Mobius circle?"

[11]In Honolulu, we are fortunate in having many easily accessible places for activities of this sort. There are two outstanding, permanent

exhibits of Asian culture, the Honolulu Art Academy and the Spaulding House, three Japanese and two Chinese movie theaters, a Japanese television channel, many Buddhist, Shinto, and Taoist temples and shrines, as well as the University of Hawaii and the East-West Center, where Asian films are shown, Asian dramas performed, and broadly inclusive cultural activities, such as "A Night in Korea," are organized.

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TAKING FLIGHT

I ran past forty years
To outsmart a hoary foe
And yet at every pause
I heard that lyre,
That singer/sage.

Yet on I ran
All hot for sin . . .
Not senile games.

The more the lust
The less the joy,
The faster I ran
The louder it grew

Till, never more than
A trick of the mind away,
I was ensnared of spirit,
Bewitched by austere beauty
Of symbol and song

And learned at last
That flight is not a thing
So mean as flesh.

—*Saul Rosenthal*

A MINI-REVIEW

Fictional Autobiography 2. Roberta Koch Suid and Floren Harper, eds. James Moffett, Senior Editor. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1973. 123 pages.

The six authors anthologized here range from the extrovert John Updike to Sylvia Plath, with her dangerous private vision. The first four selections, more than the other two, speak to the experience of the editors' intended audience—advanced 10th to 12th graders. Updike's "A & P," told from the viewpoint of a 19-year-old grocery clerk, concerns three bikini-clad girls on an innocent shopping mission, which results in callow gallantry. In Phillip Roth's "Defender of the Faith" Nathan Marx, a World War II sergeant, is caught between loyalty to his Jewish subordinates and responsibility to a very secular Army. He represents those of us experienced in the world but never enough to say we really know another's motives. The two middle selections—James Baldwin's "Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone" and Eudora Welty's humorous "Why I Live at the P.O."—depict the narrators' struggles against overpowering social environments, Harlem and the rural South, although in both stories the protagonists define themselves in familial contexts.

The last two stories are profound and difficult. Their inclusion no doubt fulfills one of the aims of the "Interaction Program"—to expand students' verbal and cognitive repertories. Sartre's "The Wall," for example, rooted in nihilism, re-creates a political prisoner's ironic thoughts the night before his execution. And Plath's "Johnny Panic and the Dream Bible" explores somewhat surrealistically Plath's conception of the sources of mega-dreams.

Thus this anthology is not for lightweights, but it does afford exposure to some of our best contemporary fiction. It is served up without introduction or footnote, features that still polarize instructors. Some critics—especially those armed with the weapon called "biographical fallacy"—may also fault the editors for assuming that these stories are essentially "autobiographical"

—Bruce MacKenzie

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